

846 is spread, the national head-dress, ornamented with
 [301] sequins, is placed on her head, and all her necklaces
 are hung round her neck, to receive the friends and
 acquaintances who now flock in to offer their con-
 gratulations. In some parts of Albania, and especially
 [431] among the Moslems, it is customary to bring hand-
 [688] some presents to the infant. As each visitor did her
 best to outshine her neighbour in the value of her
 gift, this usage, among the Roman Catholic Miridites,
 became so ruinously expensive, that the ban of the
 Church was finally laid upon it. The visitors to the
 mother and baby consequently now bring with them
 only an egg, with which they rub the face of the new
 arrival, with the wish, "*Pashi bar*" (May it be always
 white!)—i.e., never have cause to blush for its
 actions.

852 When the baby is three days old the Fates are be-
 [776] lieved to arrive and decide what its fortune is to be.
 When two of the Weird Sisters have had their say, the
 third speaks, and her decision is final.¹ On the even-
 ing of this day, which is called the child's *Poganik*,²
 all the relatives of the family assemble uninvited,
 each bringing a small loaf, a girdle cake, and a
 wooden flask of wine. On these they feast and drink
 healths to the mother and child, the formula addressed
 to the latter being, "May he have strong legs!"
 [777] The women then set to work to make a large cake,
 all present touching, "for luck," the sieve used to sift
 the flour. As the dough is being kneaded coins are
 put into it, and when baked it is broken in pieces

¹ See "The Story of the Child," p. 319.

² The meaning of this term appears to have been lost by the Albanians.

CHAP. IX.]

ALBANIAN WOMEN.

231 585
[539]

Lower your crests, ye mountains high,
That we may the moon descry
Sailing through the azure sky.
Our bride her mother's counsels heard,
Who said, "My daughter, mark my word,
Love and respect your father new."
"That, mother will I gladly do—
I'll love and honour him alway
Who's given to me a bridegroom gay."

On Monday morning, the homes of both bride and bridegroom are thronged with guests, sometimes to the number of several hundreds. Each one brings an *oka'* of coffee and another of sugar for the benefit of the house, and at the same time presents the bride with a gold coin, the value of which varies with the degree of relationship of the giver. These coins are subsequently strung into necklaces, and constitute part of the personal property of a married woman.

At early dawn the bride is dressed in her wedding finery, decked with all her jewels, and, at sunrise, is led to a corner of the principal reception-room. Here custom requires her to stand, motionless and speechless, with downcast eyes and hands crossed on her breast, until she starts for her new home. Two women, posted at either side, keep watch and ward over her, and the rest of the female guests, seated round the room on the divans, stare at the poor girl as if she were the idol of their worship. At meal-times, on this and the two following days, she eats alone, covered with a veil, though if she is anxious to make a good impression she will partake of food only

¹ About 2½ lbs. avoirdupois.

X. Decisions Taken on April 30th, 1905, by the Youth of Shalë. [68]

(From Father Gjeçov, *Kanin*, pp. 126-)

1. As from to-day up to Ash Wednesday the percentage on loans at interest is to be paid with 25 okes of grain. If this is not paid by Ash Wednesday, a percentage of 30 okes is to be taken by force from the debtor. [426]

As interest 100 grosh or 100 okes of grain as the creditor wishes are to be paid. Let him take 100 grosh if it suits him, or if he says, 'I'll have grain', let them give him 100 okes of grain.

2. Grain is never to be given to anybody by a man of Shalë unless it is wanted for a funeral meal or it is desired to make a present of not more than 20 okes. [431] [65]

3. Raki is never to be produced by a man of Shalë at a funeral meal except during the seven weeks of Lent. [273]

4. No man of Shalë is ever to give away more than 100 grosh either outside or inside the tribe. [431]

A godmother is not to present a red *xhamadam* (sleeveless jacket). [609]

No woman is to go to a wedding in a party of five or more and they are not to seek a woman outside the same house.¹ [685]

5. Whoever fires the first shot in the yard of a church or inside its boundaries is to have his house burned and must pay 20 purses under the guarantee of flock-cum-shepherd and the youth of Shalë.

6. If a man disturbs a mass that is being said and if the priest, crucifix in hand, says, 'So-and-so has troubled me', the offender will have his house burned and must pay a fine of 2 oxen to the tribe.

7. Whoever touches Church property must pay a fine of 2 oxen to the tribe.

8. Whoever molests the Church servant must pay a fine of 2 oxen to the tribe.

9. If anyone borrows coffee and sugar from the priest for a funeral meal and does not return them to him within four weeks, and if the priest complains, he must pay a fine of one ox to the tribe. [765] [426]

10. Whoever steals an ewe, goat and cow from a man of Shalë and whoever does anything to his neighbour that disgraces him, shall have his harvest burned, his fields plucked bare and his grain panniers smashed. He will pay fines of one ox to the youth and 2 rams to the government representative.

11. These laws, enacted by the youth of Shalë together with the

¹ The last clause of § 4 is given as in Mrs Hasluck's MS., but there seems to be some mistake, as the corresponding passage in the Italian version of Father Gjeçov's *Kanin* runs:

Lo shalano non può fare il compare più di 5 volte, e non può chiedere che si leghino in comparto più di 5 famiglie.

Birth, Marriage, and Death

In 1392 Bogavach Cuiavich of Rudine of his own free will releases⁰⁰⁰ from servitude Radaca, daughter of John of Albania, whom he had bought of Braycho Ucarich.

This seems to have been the case of an actual slave. But the lot of others, when sold for a long term of service, can have been little better than slavery unless they fell into good hands.

ALBANIA

I heard of a similar custom of thus selling children for a term of⁵⁹⁷ years in Malacra in South Albania. Here poor Moslems sometimes sent their daughters as far as Constantinople; and I was told that some of the Albanian boys thus purchased servant-girls from their mothers, and at the end of the term dowered them and married them to peasants on the estate. The Italian Consul at Valona, the first time I was there, told me he had thus purchased a servant girl.

Birth.—In Albania, as in Montenegro, childbirth received but the most ignorant treatment. The death-rate of mothers and children<sup>M
A
844</sup> was high.

There was great rejoicing among the mountain tribes when a boy was born and proportionate disappointment over a girl. For a son, especially a first-born, the whole family group turned out and fired rifles.

Some kind of spiritual relationship was held to exist between the child and the woman who cut the umbilical cord; but I learnt no particulars.

As in Montenegro, even in the towns there was the greatest reluctance to summon medical aid. In Scutari one day the Austrian doctor was summoned to a Moslem woman who was in the last stages of exhaustion. He found the child was already dead, and said that to<sup>A
[758]</sup> save the woman's life it must be removed at once. The family refused to believe or permit this and dismissed him. Some hours later they fetched him again—but she was dead.

On the birth of a child, both in Scutari and the mountains, all the women neighbours go at once to visit the mother and take offerings<sup>A
[431] ●
[777]</sup> of eggs. For a boy, two, four, six, or eight—an even number—are brought; for a girl, one, three, five, or seven. One egg is broken over the child's face to protect it from the Evil Eye. Presumably this makes the child unrecognizable or hideous.

Both in Albania and Montenegro, and I believe in all Balkan lands,<sup>M
A
854</sup> infants are swaddled. The cradle is of wood and serves as a packing-case in which to carry the child on its mother's back. In Scutari the cradles<sup>A
854
531</sup> are very gaily painted with conventional patterns of flowers and birds,

B. The Japangi.

The japangi is the out-of-door cloak of a married woman, and is presented as a wedding gift from the bridegroom to his bride.* It is made of scarlet cloth or felt, often imported from Austria, and the handsome silk embroidery which decorates it is the work of Albanian men tailors. It is interesting to note that according to old archives "Scarlet cloth was one of the items the Venetians used to bestow on local Albanian chieftains in the days of Venetian domination in the Adriatic."†

The garment consists of two parts, the large circular cape and a rectangular flap for a hood which is attached to it (Plate XII a). Although the material is very wide there are some joinings, and a curved gore or a long dart is cut and joined together again to make the cloak fit well on the shoulders.

It is handsomely trimmed by three panels of embroidery, one on either side of the front, like the one at the left only in "b" on Plate XII, and one across the shoulders at the back (Plate XII c). These panels consist of strips, about an inch wide, of scarlet and dark red or maroon or black cloth seamed together to form a background of stripes upon which an elaborate pattern is solidly worked in chain-stitch in yellow, white, green and violet silk, the silk being home grown, spun and dyed in most cases. The joining of the front and back panels is disguised by a number of rows of plaited braids, plain yellow ones being used alternately with mixed red, black and white ones (Plate XII h). The silk strands of which the braids are made form a long fringe at either end (Plate XII g). "The embroidery is very noteworthy. It is done entirely by men, and the patterns are traditional and vary very little, a bird, possibly a dove (Plate XII f), a serpent (Plate XII e), flowers and an ear of corn (Plate XII d) are always included, and it was impossible to get any explanation from the embroiderers as to why these items were always to be found. After much discussion by one excellent worker with his fellows they decided that it must be some old tale, long forgotten. The flowers and corn may be fertility emblems as this is a marriage garment." (M.E.D.)

When a woman becomes a widow she removes the embroidered panels and substitutes some black stripes instead, whose arrangement is shown at the right hand side of the front view of the japangi at "b" on Plate XII. A sketch (No.1935-27) by Miss Durham of a Scutarene widow wearing a japangi with black stripes can be seen in the museum collection.

No. 1935-22. In addition to the japangi with the embroidery just described there are two other examples of the sets of embroidered panels, both from Scutari (Shkodar), and one of which is drawn at "g" on Plate XII.

The fine felt stripes of which this ground is made are scarlet and very dark maroon, and the design and the technique of the embroidered work far outshines that of the other two specimens. Ivory silk chain-stitch, generally outlined in yellow, fills most of the important motives, but touches of pale blue, reseda green and violet appear here and there. The changes in the background colour enhance the richness of the general effect and part of the illustration at "g" on Plate XII has been filled in to give some idea of this variation in tone. The serpent, dove and corn

* M. E. Durham: "Some Balkan Embroideries." *Man*, Vol. XXIII. No. 8, 1923.
† loc. cit.

[Text continues on p. 57]